

# COUNTY NEWS



PUBLISHED FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

February 2002

## Campaign Concludes With Rise in Giving *Employees Shine During Critical Time for Community*

When the County started gearing up for its annual CECO/United Way campaign, little did anyone know what the future would hold. No one knew that the tragic events of Sept. 11 were yet to come, and no one knew of the impact it would have on people's charitable giving and the nonprofits they gave to.

With so many people donating to relief funds connected to Sept. 11 and the economic downturn that ensued, nonprofits helped through the County Employees Charitable Organization (CECO) and United Way needed County employees' support more than ever.

"It would be so easy to fear that our employees would be less able or inclined to donate to local charities," said Dr. Rodger Lum, campaign chairperson and director of the Health & Human Services Agency. "But it is truly heart-warming to see that County employees have not been deterred. San Diego County employees do care."

Numbers are still coming in, but contributions are expected to exceed \$15,000 per pay period in giving, with a potential to raise close to \$400,000 to help community organizations next year. More than 20 percent of County employees contribute through payroll deductions.

Many departments showed significant increases in giving, including Environmental Health, Public Defender, Air Pollution Control District, General Services, Registrar of Voters, Human Resources and Public Works.

The annual campaign gives County and Superior Court employees the opportunity to donate to either CECO or United Way through payroll giving.

## New Era for CECO

After serving for more than 20 years as the president of CECO, Vickie Velasco of HHSA's Aging and Independence Services is retiring from County service and stepping down as the leader of the volunteer organization that donates money to community organizations on behalf of County and Superior Court employees.

*Former  
President  
Vickie Velasco  
led CECO for  
more than 20  
years.*



Also retiring from the County and his long-time position as CECO treasurer is Ernie Cardoza of Public Works. Taking over the leadership reigns of CECO are: Phyllis House of HHSA, president; Jennifer Uebbing of Public Works, vice-president; Michele Peters of Superior Court, treasurer; and Lamar Olds of Planning and Land Use, secretary.

**The A-List:** Counties that received grades of A- or higher.

### Financial Management

Baltimore, Md.  
Fairfax, Va.  
Maricopa, Ariz.  
[San Diego, Calif.](#)

### Capital Management

Baltimore, Md.  
Fairfax, Va.  
[San Diego, Calif.](#)  
Westchester, N.Y.

### Human Resources

Fairfax, Va.

### Managing for Results

Fairfax, Va.  
Maricopa, Ariz.  
[San Diego, Calif.](#)

### Information Technology

Baltimore, Md.  
Fairfax, Va.  
Maricopa, Ariz.  
Oakland, Mich.  
Orange, Calif.

## County Among Best in Class in Government Service

San Diego County ranked among the top four counties in the nation in a study of government performance conducted by Syracuse University in conjunction with Governing Magazine.

The study of 40 counties across the United States looked at financial management, capital management, human resources, managing for results and information technology. San Diego County's combined B+ in those five categories put it among the top four scorers in the nation, and the highest score among participating California counties.

The county's scores included A- grades in financial management, capital management and managing for results. It received a B- for human resources, and a B+ for information technology.

"We are pleased with the results of this study by the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. It affirms what we

here at the County of San Diego have been saying all along—we are one of the best-managed counties in the nation," said Chairman Ron Roberts of the County Board of Supervisors.

The study is available in the February edition of *Governing Magazine* ([www.governing.com](http://www.governing.com)) and will be available on the project's Web site, [www.maxwell.syr.edu/gpp](http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/gpp).

The study's authors note that—like the rest of the state—San Diego County was hit hard by the revenue cuts of Prop. 13, and the recession of the early 1990s: "But (San Diego County) has used those problems as a spur to managerial creativity that has had a profound effect on its 17,000 employees and its \$3.7 billion budget."

The study noted that the County is a national leader in the use of cost-accounting, and that its Geographic Information System is among the best anywhere.

## NewsBriefs

### Encouraging Education

The San Diego County Latino Association (SDCLA) hosts its annual scholarship luncheon on Feb. 21 at Acapulco's restaurant in Old Town. Last year, nine scholarships totaling \$1,500 were given out to association members continuing their education. Tickets to the luncheon are \$20. For more information, contact Kenneth Stevens at (619) 531-5393. Any County employee can join the SDCLA.

### Forecast Reiteration

Despite shaky state and national economic indicators, San Diego's economy is expected to stabilize and even advance in the next several months, according to panelist predictions at the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual San Diego County Economic Roundtable in January. CTN will be rebroadcasting the conference through February. For times and station information, go to [www.ctn.org](http://www.ctn.org).

### Defender Decoration

The American Bar Association's Government and Public Sector Lawyers Division recognized the San Diego County Public Defender's Office with its 2001 Hodson Award for public service. The office was honored for its "Homeless Court" program, which "brings law to the streets, the court to the shelters, and the homeless back into society."

Deputy Public Defender Steve Binder helped organize the program as a result of the "revolving door" problem, where the homeless incurred court-imposed fines that they could not pay, and then returned to court on another misdemeanor offense. The goal of the program is to reintegrate homeless people into society and foster a trusting relationship between homeless people and the judicial system.

### Rancho Recognition

Rancho Guajome Adobe was pictured recently on the cover of *Westways* magazine, which is published by the Auto Club of Southern California. It was featured in an article about historic California ranchos that have stood the test of time. Park staff are especially proud because it recognizes the hard work put into its 1996 restoration. The adobe is a state and national landmark, and known as the finest example of Anglo-Hispanic domestic architecture in California with the most original fabric. The adobe is also slated to be featured in an HGTV *Restore America* segment set for filming in February.

### Ice Anticipation

The Champions on Ice tour doesn't swing through San Diego until July, but County employees can enjoy a DIBBS discount on the performance if they order now. This special offer is available through mail order only, so check out a DIBBS flier near you or call (619) 578-5781.



## In *Walt's* Words

### New Retirement Plan Turns Heads Around the County

On March 8, San Diego County employees will have the good fortune of working for an organization with one of the best retirement plans in the state.

That's right, big changes are coming to our retirement plan, and all of us must make a crucial retirement-related decision by March 7. Under the new plan, County employees may be able to retire earlier, or have more money when they retire.

Here's how it works: On March 8, the current "Tier II" system will cease to exist. In its place will be two options for general employees, Tier I or Tier A. Tier A members will get the highest retirement benefits, but your contributions will also go up for most employees. If you don't want to be in Tier A, you have to "opt out," and you'll be in Tier 1. You must file the "opt out" paperwork with your payroll clerk by March 7, and you can't change your mind later. (Safety employees will have a "3 percent at 50" plan, and won't have to make the opt out decision.)

Why are we upgrading the County retirement system? The Board of Supervisors wants the County to be as competitive as possible in recruiting and retaining the best employees. They looked at our old retirement plan and saw room for improvement.

Once these new benefits take effect—March 8, as long as our pending litigation is resolved, as we expect it will be—many of you may retire. For those of you who have worked hard to reach this milestone, I salute you for your service to the County and wish you well in your new endeavors.

There's also good news for those of us who plan to stick around for a while. The influx of retirees will create many promotional opportunities, and chances for professional and career advancement. However, we don't expect a mass exodus on March 8, and we are prepared to manage the County through this period of change.

So, do study the materials from the retirement association, visit their Web site and talk to a financial adviser. That way, you can make the best decision for you and your family.

Walt Ekard  
Chief Administrative Officer

## Mentor Program Inspires Workers to Think Beyond Comfort Zone

When Probation looked at its recruiting, hiring, training and retention strategies, it found that despite its best efforts, many newly hired employees were leaving the department within two years.

So staff created a pilot mentoring program, with the hopes of encouraging employees to become leaders of the future and improving employee retention. In December it "graduated" its first class of mentorees and garnered positive reviews from the participants.

"Every person, especially ones just on board, should take this step and learn," said Mary Hudson, who celebrated a promotion to Deputy Probation Officer just one month after completing the program. The experience inspired her to think beyond what she was comfortable with, and see how she could help the department and the people Probation serves. She highly recommends the program to her coworkers as "it will enhance themselves, the department, and they might just help change a life."

The pilot program matched 30 mentors with 30 mentorees. The process started last January, with a call for applications, and ended with the December graduation. The program itself was six months long, during which the mentorees met with their mentors to create their own career development plan.

As part of the process, some mentorees attended career development courses, shadowed their mentor or conducted "job information" interviews.

"I think people were very open," said Senior Probation Officer Katy Lancaster, the program's coordinator. From the mentors perspective she noticed "there was a real desire to help someone." And while it wasn't realistic to assume that every mentor could help his or her mentoree reach their goals in such a short time, they helped them get started in the right direction.

Hudson was a unique participant in that she had already spent 18 years in Probation when she signed up to be mentored. She was comfortable in her job as a Correctional Deputy Probation Officer, and didn't really see herself moving up in the department. But it was her mentor who helped her see beyond where she was to where she could be.

"It was his prodding, nudging and encouraging that led me to finish up what I needed to become a deputy probation officer," she said.

Probation is already in the process of starting the next round of mentoring, and hopes to develop a new phase of the program to mentor new hires, as well as new supervisors.



*Probation's pilot mentor program celebrates a successful end at a ceremony in December. Pictured: Katy Lancaster (coordinator), Ja'net Green (mentoree), Janet Rasco (mentor), and Chief Probation Officer Alan Crogan.*

## Ver•ba•tim

Letters from satisfied customers served by County employees.

**Edward Marsh** (HHSA) was praised for his strong work ethic and his accommodating manner.

"Had I not been fortunate enough to speak with [him], we would still be fighting a losing battle. He is wonderful!"

**Melinda Taini** (Parks & Recreation) impressed a couple visiting a County park when she helped them locate some needed gear.

"We really appreciate park rangers who are so pleasant and helpful."

**Jacob Enriquez** (Parks & Recreation) enthralled guests at the Rancho Guajome Adobe with his story telling.

"I just had to let you know how much all of us enjoyed the day because of Mr. Enriquez."

**Bob Daenitz** (Parks & Recreation) was praised for his work keeping Steele Canyon Park clean and beautiful, in addition to being an all-around nice guy.

"We always see him working hard on some area of the facility. He also always has a smile and hello for all that patron the park."

**Denisse Macias** (Assessor/Recorder/Clerk) was credited for being extremely helpful on a complicated project.

"I generally dread city and county offices, but this visit was such a pleasure. What an outstanding employee you have!"

**El Cajon branch library staff** received these words of encouragement from a satisfied customer:

"I wanted to write this to express what I feel is an outstanding, ongoing trait of the employees—an extremely high humanistic capacity—rarely seen in an institutional setting such as this."

**Vicki Doty, Carl Adams, Kevin Higgins, Paul McKeighan and Bob Mattke** (Planning & Land Use) were thanked for their patience in helping a customer obtain a permit.

"Each time I was there I was given the most courteous service and the personnel, I know, went far beyond their duty to give me assistance and guidance."

**Toroshinia Kennedy** (General Services) was praised for her diligent and steadfast work on a project.

"You are a pleasure to work with and I do appreciate your helping me to meet this important ERP project deadline."

**Eddie Arthur** (General Services) was given words of appreciation for always responding in a timely manner.

"He follows through on every request, the timeframe, and provides suggestions for future preventative maintenance and office improvements."

**Eva Marcelli** (HHSA) was commended for the way she treated a person applying for assistance.

"I followed her advice and by the end of the day, problems that seemed impossible were solved. I know she sees a lot of people each day, and it is very hard to try and meet everyone's needs, but she was just great."

**Robyn Luke** (Human Resources) was praised for going "above and beyond" to ensure a deadline was met.

"You deserve a 'thanks' so I wanted to tell you how much I appreciated you helping me out here."



# Registrar of Voters Revs into High Gear Over Gubernatorial Primary

Long before campaign ads began running on television, the County's Registrar of Voters office was already in high gear preparing for the March 5 gubernatorial primary election.

"We work for months ahead to get ready for an election," said Registrar Sally McPherson.

There's handling the candidate filings, then mailing the sample ballots and absentee ballots, registering voters, getting the poll materials in place, and answering questions from the public. And managing all of this means a huge influx of workers.

Beginning with the candidate filing period that runs through December, the ROV starts bringing in temporary staff. The office has only 49 full-time employees, but swells to around 350 leading up to an election day.

"We keep adding more and more, until we peak out on election day," McPherson said. "You walk in here the day after an election and it's like a tomb compared to what it's like the weeks before."



ROV will hire up to 300 temporary workers in preparation for election day.

In addition to running a successful election, the ROV office focuses its efforts on making it easier for people to access the information they need to participate in the democratic process. With approximately 1.4 million registered voters

(which ranks among the top five in the country), handling the onslaught of phone calls leading up to and on election day can be daunting. That's where the ROV's Web site and interactive phone bank save the day.

The Registrar of Voter's Web site ([www.sdvote.com](http://www.sdvote.com) or through the County's Web site) is an extensive resource for voters. It includes information to

get folks registered, to help them find where their polling place is, and what's on the ballot. It also features election night results starting at 8 p.m. The most popular feature of the interactive phone bank is the polling place locator.

While this upcoming voting day is the smallest of the "big elections," substantial changes to the format of primary elections in California have raised the stakes for the ROV. Whereas the last few primaries have been "open" (meaning voters could vote across party lines), with this election California returns to a closed primary format.

"It significantly complicates the election," McPherson said.

San Diego County already has about 200 different ballot types. Returning to a closed format multiplies that number by the eight different versions based on political party. The end result: around 1,600 versions of the sample ballot that must be printed correctly and sent to the right person.

## NewsMakersNewsMakers

**David Cranford** was named Assistant Chief Probation Officer, to become effective in March upon the retirement of the current assistant chief, David Price. Cranford currently serves as the lead for the Probation Department's information technology transformation project, and served as director at the Hall of Justice. Cranford has been with the department since 1974.

**Natalie Rencher** was named Deputy Library Director for the County Library. Her first library job was as a library technician for the County Library in the late 1970s, and she has also worked for the San Jose and San Diego city libraries. Rencher's most recent assignment with the County Library was as library capital projects manager.

County News is published for the 17,000 employees of the County of San Diego.

### Board of Supervisors

Greg Cox, District 1  
Dianne Jacob, District 2  
Pam Slater, District 3  
Ron Roberts, District 4  
Bill Horn, District 5

County News is available on the County's Intranet at [cww/mp](http://cww/mp)

This information is available upon request in alternative formats for persons with disabilities.



### Chief Administrative Officer

Walter F. Ekard

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### Roberts Takes Turn as Board Chairman



At the Jan. 8 Board of Supervisors meeting, outgoing Chairman Bill Horn (left) turned over the chairmanship to Supervisor Ron Roberts. Also selected as officers for 2002 were Supervisor Greg Cox, Vice Chairman, and Supervisor Pam Slater, Chair Pro Tem.

# COUNTY NEWS *Extra*

## Service Awards

Congratulations to County employees reaching the following milestones in February:

### 40 years

Corinne Wong Miller (Human Resources)

### 35 years

Donna M. Garrett (Superior Court)

### 30 years

Bernardo H. Cota (Public Works)  
Noreen Crane (Public Works)  
Teddy F. Crisostomo (General Services)  
Nicholas Del Real, Jr. (General Services)  
Janet Irvine Fisher (Retirement)  
Charles Garcia (Public Works)  
Dan D. Harrison (Public Works)  
Paul S. Peyton, Jr. (Public Works)  
Donald P. Pickford (HHSA)  
Melvin A. Roberts (Sheriff)  
William N. Schutt (Public Works)  
George Weinberg-Harter (HHSA)

Duane M. Wilkinson (Child Support Services)  
Roy G. Wolf (Public Works)  
Stephen S. Wood (Sheriff)  
Albert L. Wright (Public Works)

### 25 years

Karen T. Axall (Sheriff)  
Maria M. Barragan (District Attorney)  
Andrea E. Belsky (Auditor & Controller)  
Lori A. Bird (Sheriff)  
Kemary L. Crowder (Superior Court)  
John W. Durante (General Services)  
Elinor Elphick (Sheriff)  
Charlotte Flowers (Sheriff)  
Robert D. Gould (General Services)  
Iqbal A. Khan (Auditor & Controller)  
Sandra Krugen (Assessor/Recorder/Clerk)  
Melinda A. Newman (HHSA)  
Donna M. Pool (HHSA)  
Frances D. Schaad (Probation)  
Richard L. Stewart (HHSA)

### 20 years

Arthur B. Babbitt (HHSA)  
Dennis J. Brugos (Sheriff)  
Larry T. Bulow (Sheriff)  
Blesilda Castillo (Superior Court)  
Ronny A. Cox (Sheriff)  
Ronald D. Cuevas (Sheriff)  
Estelle D. Freeman (Superior Court)  
Debra Hathaway (HHSA)  
Laura J. Heilig (Sheriff)  
Lanny J. Jacquot (Sheriff)  
David J. Lattuca (District Attorney)  
Gonzalo Lopez (Sheriff)  
Luis P. Lugo (HHSA)  
Annette E. McDaniel (Superior Court)  
Robert J. Modell (HHSA)  
Robyn Lenore Phelps (HHSA)  
Michael J. Tabler (Assessor/Recorder/Clerk)

## In Memoriam

The San Diego County Employees Retirement Association reports that the following retired employees recently passed away:

Virginia J. Andrews (Hospital)	10/29/01	Charles O. Lindsay (Deferred)	11/25/01
Roy E. Blank (Municipal Court)	12/15/01	John J. Lukasik (Community Svs Agency)	11/17/01
Herman C. Daugh (Welfare)	11/23/01	Wayne F. McBride (Agriculture)	12/17/01
Mabel M. Fackler (Health Services)	11/22/01	Jack R. Merker (Media & Public Relations)	12/01/01
Maxine A. Gafford (Municipal Court)	11/25/01	Margaret R. Meyer (Probation)	9/13/01
Sadie V. Hamilton (District Attorney)	10/19/01	Apul F. O'Shea (Public Works)	12/11/01
Leona M. Hardy (Registrar of Voters)	12/06/01	Margaret Pownder (Municipal Court)	11/26/01
Warren M. Jones (Social Services)	12/02/01	Ernest P. Starr (Public Works)	12/07/01
Frances C. Landrum (Municipal Court)	12/11/01	Mildred Weinberg (LUER)	12/03/01

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the friends and families of the following active employees who passed away: Chad C. Baldwin of HHSA (11/24/01), Charles R. Howard of HHSA (12/17/01), and James P. Krutsch of Auditor & Controller (12/07/01).

*County News Extra* includes expanded information about and for County employees. If you have something you'd like considered for either *County News* or *County News Extra*, please contact the newsletter editor at (619) 595-4632 or e-mail at [rcarmich@co.san-diego.ca.us](mailto:rcarmich@co.san-diego.ca.us). Items can also be faxed to (619) 595-4664 or mailed to MS A-359, Attn: *County News*.